EVEL
ONE

PRISM

AN ANGLICAN MONTHLY

JANUARY 1960 Vol. III No. 9

EVOLUTION AND MORALS

Is. 6d.

PRISM

JANUARY 1960

VOL. III NO. 9

An Anglican Monthly

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PRISM, 7 Tufton Street, London, S.W.1

Telephone : ABBey 3760

Prism can be obtained at Church bookshops

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Focus

In January there is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, initiated in the 1930's by a Roman Catholic priest—the Abbé Couturier. The aim is to pray that Our Lord will bring about visible unity "in the way He wills and by the means He wills".

A contemporary of the Abbé Couturier was Père Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit, who is the subject of our first article. Teilhard de Chardin was a scientist; reputed to be one of most important in his field since Darwin. His theories were forbidden to be published by the Roman Catholic authorities. They were held to be heretical: though it was never suggested that he was not a saintly man nor a loyal member of his order.

If there is to come about that visible unity of Christians which in some form already exists invisibly, it might have to come by ever greater realisations of the truth which at the moment we see dimly. "In the way He wills and by the means He wills" might imply letting our minds open to the factual discoveries of loyal Christians enquiring scientifically into man's and the world's meaning. The works of these two men might thus be complementary. Perhaps when we pray for unity, which we must do, we should pray also for more understanding.

A Prophetic Vocation:
Père Teilhard de Chardin

MARTIN JARRETT-KERR, C.R.

Many people will now be reading Père Teilhard's *The Phenomenon of Man*[1], so I propose to discuss his life and total *oeuvre*, of which this volume is but the first. Since Père Teilhard is, on any reckoning, one of the dozen or so most original and most controversial thinkers of the twentieth century, it is good to know that Messrs Collins are undertaking the translation of all his works. The translating of his French is in itself a hard enough task, since he covered so wide a range of scientific expertise and needed to coin his own terminology for much of his speculation: but it has been admirably done by Mr. Bernard Wall, assisted by a committee of scientists, philosophers and theologians.

I

Here is a Jesuit who, by the time of his death at 74 in 1955, had become one of the leading geologist-palaeontologists of his time. He started off modestly enough: a Professor of Geology at the Catholic Institute in Paris after the first world war. But he was sent out to China to assist in geological and palaeontological research there in 1923: and when he returned to France in 1924 he found that his ideas were becoming unacceptable to ecclesiastical authority, and in 1926, much to the relief of the Church, he returned to China and became scientific adviser to the Geological Survey there. This check on his career in France was providential, as it meant that he had the good fortune to be geological director of the excavations which resulted in the discovery of "Pekin Man". His name will always be linked with the professional reports on this famous fossil skull, and from this time he became increasingly sought after. He was appointed the official geologist on the Citroën *Croisière Jaune* (1931—2), an expedition which spanned Turkestan and Mongolia; he "geologised" in Burma, Java, India and Abyssinia; and after the second world war he became a permanent Research Fellow of the Viking (now Wenner-Gren) Foundation of New York, and was sent twice by the Foundation to South Africa to advise about subsidies to the excavations there which had discovered the "Australopithecus". During all this time his publications were limited to technical monographs in scientific journals, and semi-popular reports on evolutionary views and themes in the Jesuit

[1] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: *The Phenomenon of Man* (*Collins* 25/-).

periodical, *Etudes*. His larger, and more speculative works circulated in roneo form, and never obtained the *imprimatur*. Indeed, he was forbidden to accept a Professorship in the *Collège de France* (one of the highest honours in that country), to address public meetings in France, and even to attend an international palaeontological congress in Paris, called by Jean Piveteau, in 1954. In 1948 he visited Rome, to see if there was the possibility of obtaining both the *imprimatur* for *Le Phénomène Humain* and permission to be a candidate for the *Collège de France:* and while there he met Père Garrigou-Lagrange (his chief adversary)—"We smiled at each other and talked about the Auvergne." But of course authorisation was refused. Before his death the Editor of *Etudes* told him confidentially that his works would never receive the *imprimatur*, and he had better take any action necessary to secure their posthumous publication outside the Church; hence the distinguished Committee of scientists and men of letters which sponsored these books after his death—and among the names are such internationally renowned experts as Arambourg, Barbour, Abbé Breuil, de Broglie, Dorothy Garrod, Von Koenigswald, Le Gros Clerk, Malan, Pivetau, Simpson, Vandel, Westoll (scientists), and Arnold Toynbee, R. Aron, Jean Hyppolite, A. Malraux, A. Siegfried, Léopold Sédar Senghor, and Jean Wahl (men of letters).

One of the most charming tributes to him comes from his agnostic Chinese scientific colleague, Chung-Chien Young: "Although he was a Catholic he had an exceptionally wide knowledge of the natural sciences—to my great astonishment. He had come to China because of a sort of punishment imposed on him by the Cardinal for something he had written against the idea of religion". The naive incomprehension of this is as affecting as its sincerity. And certainly he must have been an unconventional figure. The same Dr. Young tells us of a visit they paid together to the fossiliferous fissures at Wanhsien. They could not obtain accommodation for the night, so Père Teilhard suggested they try the Catholic Mission. A Chinese priest greeted them and asked who they were. When Young told him that Teilhard was a priest, he looked suspicious—for Teilhard was dressed as a geologist. The priest tried him out in Latin. "Although P. Teilhard knew Latin well, he had not had occasion to speak it for years. So he could not speak fluently with the catholic priest, whose suspicions were thus confirmed." They were given beggarly accommodation for two nights, until the priest had been able to telegraph the Central Mission—after which he moved them with apologies to more comfortable rooms. On the *Croisère Jaune* not one of the several dozen expeditioners was a practising Catholic: but on January 1st 1932, Teilhard said a Mass before they set out, and everyone attended. One of them wrote to his wife that "it was a very moving sight to see all these men in their expedition-kit, gathered together in this little chapel lost in the heart of China, recollecting themselves

before God prior to facing all the unforeseen that lay between them and their goal . . . ." And in his sermon before this Mass, Teilhard addressed them: "My dear friends. Here we are this morning, all together in this little church . . . . to begin this new year in the face of God. God no doubt has not the same precise meaning, the same face, for each of us. But because we are all men, none of us can escape the sense . . . . that above us and in front of us there exists a higher energy, in which we must recognise—since it is higher—the enlarged equivalent of our own intelligence and will. It is in this powerful Presence that we should be recollected for a moment at the beginning of this year. We ask this Presence to unite us . . . with those whom we love, far away . . . . And we beg His all-powerful presence . . . to crown our enterprise with success, and that any suffering which may befall us . . . may be transformed in the higher joy of taking our little place in the universe and having done what was our duty. . . .It is in order that this may happen that I shall offer to Him, for all of you, this Mass—the highest form of Christian prayer." And when, as often, he was unable to say Mass on his various expeditions, he would pray, "Since, Lord, once again . . . . in the steppes of Asia, I have neither bread nor wine nor altar, I will raise myself above these symbols up to the pure majesty of Reality, and I, your priest, will offer You, upon the altar of the whole Earth, the labour and the suffering of the world". Sometimes it was suggested to him that he should leave the Church, since he felt so profoundly the importance of the message which the Church would not allow him to proclaim; he scorned the idea. More seriously it was suggested that he should, like the Abbé Bremond, leave the Jesuits and become a secular, which would give him slightly greater freedom; he replied that that would not only deny his vocation but undermine the very ideas of Christian community which he wanted to commend. So he lived in silence, convinced that the truth in his message would reach men eventually. As it has.

II

A testy writer in *The Times Literary Supplement* recently attacked Christian apologists who try "to convince the ungodly by borrowing their own weapons of argument. This ill-advised attempt to marry absolutism with scientific method has, perhaps, done more than anything else to discredit the whole movement among serious students". (July 31, 1959). And he goes on to give examples, among which is "Père Teilhard de Chardin's attempted reconciliation of Christianity with evolution (which *inter alia*, predicts a *cultural* super-organism developing in a direct line from physical mutations)". No one who had *read* Teilhard could be guilty of so monstrously misleading an account; and it is enough to glance at Sir Julian Huxley's admirable Introduction to *The Phenomenon of Man* to see how misleading it is. Indeed, in a Symposium at Columbia (New

York) on "The Unity of Human Knowledge" in 1954, Teilhard sided wholly with Huxley and the biologists against the "immobilist" position (with regard to man's present evolution) taken by the philosophers and theologians there (Gilson, Malik, Van Dusen . . .). It is noteworthy that the theme of man's cultural development being the continuation of his evolution is argued on somewhat similar terms—quite independently—by a geneticist not likely to favour religious apologetic, Prof. C. H. Waddington, in his 1959 Woodhull Lecture. (*Nature*, June 13th, 1959). Teilhard in all his works writes primarily as a naturalist: and he is not concerned with "reconciling" evolution with anything. "Reconcile" begs the whole question: we reconcile what is separate, hostile, at odds—but Teilhard's life was spent saying that evolution *itself* cannot be understood so long as "Man" is considered to be a sort of "sport", a dead (because not evolving) branch sticking out sideways from the main evolutionary trunk. This is not primarily "Christian apologetic" at all: it is discourse about the real. If he addressed himself to scientists—reminding them, for example, of the profound implications of Julian Huxley's famous "man is nothing else than evolution become conscious of itself" (p. 221)—he addressed himself perhaps even more urgently to Christians, to tell them what scientific discoveries mean, how much wider their faith can sweep when the evolutionary process is understood ("Your God is too small" is in effect what he has to say to them).

There have been two main types of "theodicy" during this century. (1) There has been the "Scale of Nature" type: the tracing of a line called "Nature, Man and God". Bergson, Lloyd Morgan, Smuts' "holism", Alexander, and finally Whitehead—these have all been called upon to trace this line. Gore, William Temple, Tennant (to some extent) and—most distinguished of them—Fr. Thornton, have all used this method. Mid-way between this type and the second comes Karl Heim, with his "analogy of dimensions" starting from physics but ending up in an existentialist account of the human person. (2) Other philosophical theologians, more doubtful of the relevance of the sub-human, have concentrated upon the intellectual and moral factors in man as pointing to God. Such are A. E. Taylor, de Burgh, Gabriel Marcel, various kinds of "existentialists" culminating in Tillich, and, finally, Dr. Farrer. Dr. Farrer falls in a class by himself, but his criticism of type (1) is the most serious. He urged, in his *Finite and Infinite* (and he has returned to the charge at the end of his Gifford Lectures, *The Freedom of the Will*) that we must be sceptical "of the possibility of having sufficient insight into the mode of activity exercised by the other creatures" to be able to construct a "scale of nature" (p.44); and that a philosopher like Alexander fails to recognise "that his elementary entities are personified abstractions which cannot really be thought about, analogies derived negatively from our own being . . . . If he made serious work with this reflection, he would

not dream of beginning with the less known in order to build up the more known, nor expend the sweat of an Egyptian bondage in rearing a pyramid, merely to crown it with an apex which would stand more handsomely upon the ground." (p. 246).

Père Teilhard clearly falls within category (1)—but with a difference. The main difference lies in the fact that he speaks all the time as a scientist in direct contact with the evidence: and the evidence points indeed to a "scale of nature". But "scale" is the wrong word: he is not standing at the top of a ladder looking back and watching its lower rungs disappearing into the mist; he is an observer—an observer *engagé*—watching a process unfold. His own expertise happened to lie in the geology of vertebrates and mammifers: but even to be able to see them emerge, a great deal of biology and not a little physics is required—indeed, chemistry also, and astrophysics. And so he is able to start from the hydrogen atom and advance to the crystal and the virus and so on—up from the "barysphere" to the "biosphere" and finally the "noosphere". He is emphatic that this is no extended occurrence of the "pathetic fallacy", no mere reading back into sub-man of notions and experiences taken from the level of man: for the evidence that points to evolution at all, as a process, (which only cranks now reject) is the same evidence that points to a continuity of principle all the way up. The principle is what he calls "complexity-consciousness": i.e., that every increase in consciousness is an increase in complexity, and vice-versa. This means that we can expect to find that consciousness, appearing fully in man, "has a cosmic extension". And he is delighted to find confirmation, independently, in J. B. S. Haldane:

> "We do not find obvious evidence of life or mind in so-called inert matter, and we naturally study them most easily where they are most completely manifested; but if the scientific point of view is correct, we shall ultimately find them, at least in rudimentary forms, all through the universe." (*The Inequality of Man*, p. 113).

Therefore, far from agreeing with Dr. Farrer that philosophical theology should be concentrated upon the "substance" of the human will, Teilhard would say that our understanding of the human will and of its developments is incomplete except in the context of the total evolutionary process. He does not actually distinguish (as he might have done), within the "noosphere" (sphere of mind) a "*thelo*sphere" (sphere of will); but he does discuss the future evolution of man, and tries to show how the development of human personality is the continuation of the "complexity-consciousness" principle at the human end of the evolutionary process: and therefore that the growth of a genuine community of persons, combining collectively with respect for the individual, must be the next stage. And this means a growth in

love—the point at which the Christian revelation, illuminating in a general way the whole process, becomes specifically relevant.

This brief indication of his concern is enough to show that he has put himself into a position on the field where he is bound to be attacked from all sides. The scientists will no doubt question his extrapolations and his making what they will call "value-judgements" about the barysphere, the hydrosphere, the biosphere, etc. The philosophers will want to know whether his metaphorical way of talking expresses true relations or whether it doesn't rather smuggle mentalistic rabbits into materialistic hats. The theologians will protest that the continuity he appears to see from the lowest point of evolution up to man and from there to the "point *Omega*" (God) can only be used to support a heretical theology: where, they will ask, is the Fall, where is Grace, and where is God, on this account, if not Himself within the evolutionary process? In this first volume of Teilhard's works there is not much—though there is something—said to answer these criticisms. It is, curiously enough, in some of his other, more severely technical, works, but also in his *Le Milieu Divin* and his wonderful Letters (especially those assembled in Claude Cuénot's great book, *Pierre T. de Chardin, les grandes étapes de son évolution*) that something like an answer can be found. I do not myself think that the answer is wholly satisfactory; especially I am clear that Père Teilhard was not sufficiently aware of sin as the disruptive, and of grace as a *scandalon*, to do justice to the biblical-catholic revelation. But even if that is true, may this very fact not have been a part of his vocation? Again and again in his letters he complains of how completely the non-scientist fails to enter into the world of the scientist; again and again he sees the evidence simply with the eye of the trained naturalist. The time- and space-scale of the palaeontologist, as of the astronomer or astrophysicist, is such that it requires (one can imagine) an effort of the imagination, a conscious and unnatural switch of the attention for him to take serious account of the sort of problems and evidence which appear real to the moralist or theologian. If many of Teilhard's expressions are, as it might seem, heretical by implication, they certainly were not so in intention—his life, his loyalty to the Church which muzzled him, his spirituality, his daily personal dealings all show him to have been a devout, simple, integral catholic. Indeed, many who knew him intimately testify to his sanctity. If we, in cold blood and at a distance, like to talk of "the limitations of the scientific point of view" (a qualification which Père Teilhard would have vigorously rejected), then we must go on to say that Teilhard's vocation was by entering that world and working in it to share its limitations. (The limitations of the non-scientific point of view can be seen from a remark by an American Redemptorist Father, which Teilhard quotes in one of his letters, and which appeared in *Time Magazine*, August 15th, 1952, *à propos* "flying saucers" and their possible passengers: "If these rational beings"

—the passengers of the "saucers"—"have escaped Original Sin, that is to say if they possess corporal immortality such as Adam and Eve once enjoyed, it would be silly for our pilots to try and kill them. They would be un-killable.") No one can doubt that a vocation to work and witness in such a world of natural science is a vocation of great honour and importance. And it is above all a vocation to look, listen and see. One of the most vivid and revealing pictures of Père Teilhard is given by his friend, the geologist Helmut de Terra, who accompanied him on an expedition to India :

> "I remember how, once when we had to make our way through thick vegetation almost like a jungle, Père Teilhard suddenly stopped dead as if he could hear something (the forest was silent). 'The forest,' he said, ' is like the ocean, so full of hidden lives.' He stayed there quite motionless, enjoying the silence, and seemed to breathe in something of that hidden life which he loved so much."

*The Enforcement of Morals**

David Nicholls

* This was written before seeing Mr. Wollheim's recent article on the subject in *Encounter*, which makes some of the same points as I do, but does not, I think, concentrate sufficiently upon the ethical inadequacy of Mr. Justice Devlin's position.

Much has been written in an *ad hoc* way with reference to the Report of the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution[1], but the underlying assumptions have not received quite the same attention. Sir Patrick Devlin[2], however, has done something to fill this gap and it is the purpose of this article to examine his ideas on this thorny and difficult question of the relation between law and morality, or between crime and sin.

The first thing which calls for comment is Sir Patrick's conception of morality. In an attempt to be liberal, it appears that our author has wandered along slippery paths. He tries to discover a definition of "sin" which will be acceptable to the atheist as well as to the

[1] Cmnd. 247, 1957.

[2] *The Enforcement of Morals*, Maccabaean Lecture in Jurisprudence of the British Academy 1959.

theist, thus divorcing sin from religion[3], defining it as transgression against the principles of morality. How then does Sir Patrick conceive of morality? "Every moral judgement," he tell us, "unless it claims a divine source, is simply a feeling that no right-minded man could behave in any other way without admitting that he was doing wrong"[4]. And who is the "right-minded man"? Not the rational man, not the good man, nor the impartial observer, but "the man in the Clapham omnibus", the man in the jury box, in fact the average man in a society. Thus the morality with which Sir Patrick is concerned is what Locke referred to as the law of opinion:

> "The laws that men generally refer their actions to, to judge of their rectitude or obliquity, seem to me to be these three. 1. The divine law. 2. The civil law. 3. The law of opinion or reputation, if I may so call it. By the relation they bear to the first of these, men judge whether their actions are sins or duties; by the second, whether they be criminal or innocent; and by the third, whether they be virtues or vices."[5]

It must therefore be borne in mind, that our learned author, when speaking of immorality or sin, is not speaking of the transgression against an immutable law, divine or natural, but the transgression of the commonly accepted standard; of offences against the law of opinion; of acts which outrage the common conscience of a community. We must examine this concept a little before proceeding to discuss the relations which ought to hold between this moral code and the criminal law. Sir Patrick points out[6] that in various religious systems, and thus in various societies, there are wide differences in the moral law—an act which is regarded as immoral in one society is accepted in another. This is true, but many people would wish to go further and say that some of these societies have warped conceptions of the moral law, and that others have more adequate ideas on the subject, in the light of an objective moral code; our author, however, does not appear to be among them: "Immorality then," he writes, "for the purpose of the law, is what every right-minded" (i.e. the man in the Clapham omnibus, or presumably for China, the man in the Pekin rickshaw) "person is presumed to consider to be immoral."[7] We are dealing with a relativistic moral conception; our author must believe that while it is immoral to burn widows in twentieth century England,

[3] Sir Patrick appears to believe that "up till a century or so ago no one thought it worth distinguishing between religion and morals." (*op. cit.* p. 12). As we shall see, John Locke (1632—1704) did just this. Also the distinction of the schoolmen and later publicists such as Grotius and Pufendorf between natural and divine law contain seeds of the distinction between religion and morals.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 18.

[5] *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 2 : 28 : 7.

[6] *Op cit.* p. 6.

[7] *Ibid.* p. 16.

it is quite moral in nineteenth century India ; this law of opinion is the only one which the lawmaker should consult. Objective right and wrong are thrown to the wind, as far as politics is concerned at least.

Yet efforts are made to soften the impact of this scandalous doctrine :

> I suppose that moral standards do not shift ; so far as they come from divine revelation they do not, and I am willing to assume that the moral judgements made by a society always remain good for that society. But the extent to which society will tolerate—I mean tolerate, not approve—departures from moral standards varies from generation to generation."[8]

Does our learned author really believe that this is so? Has he ever travelled on a Clapham bus? A century ago his average man would have regarded divorce and Sunday sport as immoral ; today they are not merely tolerated, but accepted as within the popular moral code. The man in the street in large parts of nineteenth century India would have regarded the suicide of widows on the funeral pires of their husbands as natural and right, today it would be condemned as immoral. In this matter Sir Patrick is plainly wrong. Then we are told that it is "the clergy who are the natural guardians of public morals".[9] Why should the clergy be expected to "guard" a system of public morality in this country, which permits such things as sexual intercourse before marriage, and remarriage after divorce, which the majority of clerics do not accept? Who are the "natural guardians of morality" in, for example Northern Nigeria, "the clergy", the mullahs, or the witch-doctors? The fact is that if Sir Patrick is going to define morality in terms of public opinion, he must not throw these sops of immuability and religion to English bourgeois morality ; which for him, after all, is only valid in bourgeois England.

We must now pass on to Sir Patrick's conception of the purpose of law. "Law exists for the protection of society"[10], we are told. If he merely means to assert that the first duty of law in a society is to prevent the forceable overthrow of existing institutions, he may be right ; but much more is involved. By protection he seems to mean the maintenance of the *status quo* in society, in regard to both actions and thoughts. Anything which will lead to a change in the beliefs—in our contexts moral beliefs—or practices of the society must be suppressed by law. It is the purpose of law to guarantee that the present beliefs and actions of the average man are maintained, whatever these beliefs and actions might be. Certainly the criterion of good law which Sir Patrick puts forward here is the most conservative which has had support among political and legal theorists. In the sixteenth century popular morality demanded that witches be burnt and that heretics should be punished and forced to conform ;

[8] *Op cit.* p. 18. [9] *Ibid.* p. 21. [10] *Ibid.* p. 23.

should the law have attempted to give a lead, and, as far as possible, try to protect these unfortunate people from the ignorance of the mob? Not a bit of it—our learned author would have the law enforce these practices. Should the British administration in nineteenth century India have attempted to suppress the practice of suttee? Indeed not—on this criterion it should have enjoined the odious custom. Should the southern states in America endeavour, by wisely and tactfully formulated laws, gradually to break down the race prejudice which exists there? No—we are told that the law exists to protect the fabric of society and to maintain the moral code (i.e. the beliefs of the average jury-man). A change in the law might have the dreadful effect of modifying the fabric of society and introducing dangerous new moral ideas of race harmony.

The conclusion which we are forced to draw from his lecture is that our learned author either wishes the above mentioned practices to continue, or that he is ignorant of the consequences of his theories. I prefer to think that the latter is true.

What, then, is wrong with Sir Patrick's theory of the relation between law and morality? Just this; it is based on the sands of moral scepticism and relativism, denying, for the practical purposes of law, the existence of an objective morality which is relevant to India and Russia as well as to Britain and America—although its particular applications in law will be different.

> "If," writes Sir Patrick, "the reasonable[11] man believes that a practice is immoral and believes also—no matter whether the belief is right or wrong, so be it that it is honest and dispassionate—that no right-minded member of his society could think otherwise, then for the purpose of the law it is immoral."[12]

If the average man in sixteenth century Geneva thinks that it is immoral to stay away from church on Sunday, then the law must compel church attendance. The law is the slave of public opinion and the eternal values of liberty and freedom can go into the bin. Can a wise and liberal ruler morally appeal over the head of a fanatical people to a higher law? Our learned author would say not. If the average man thinks, no matter how he has come to think it, perhaps by a diabolical system of propaganda, that Jews are a menace, then a ruler is right to persecute them; Hitler has received unfair treatment from his critics. For our author, the will

[11] i.e. the average man.

[12] *Ibid.* p. 23. Sir Patrick declares that "there must be toleration of the maximum individual freedom that is consistent with the integrity of society" (*ibid.* p. 17), and this looks like being an objective limit to the right of the state to enforce morality. But, in fact, in Sir Patrick's system, this can only apply in Britain because the man on the Clapham bus happens to have imbibed the ideas of John Stuart Mill, and is fairly tolerant. In a country where the average man is intolerant, this limit cannot apply, and is thus just as relativistic as the system of morality which can be enforced; in Britain toleration happens to be part of our system of morality, therefore it cannot constitute the limit which it purports to in Sir Patrick's system.

of the people is the only moral guide to the legislator, and an appeal to eternal values is excluded. I would not wish to suggest that lawmakers should ignore the moral opinions of the people, nor that there are not times when desirable legislation must be held up owing to the fact that it would result in rebellion; but there are many occasions when an enlightened lawmaker can lead public opinion.

Sir Patrick Devlin comes forward in the rôle of a defender of morality against the tendencies of the Wolfenden Report, while he is in fact a wolf in sheep's clothing. His doctrine is very much more dangerous to morality than anything which the Wolfenden Report puts forward.

If we reject Sir Patrick's theory, what do we put in its place? What should be the relation between crime and sin? We shall first take sin to mean an offence against the law of God. Few people would wish to suggest that crime and sin should be equated—not even Sir Patrick, on his own definition of sin—and various criteria have been suggested for marking off those sins which should not be punished by the state. Those which involve only thoughts, because the state cannot deal with these (Marsilius, Warburton, Blackstone, Paley and others); those which are better committed than refrained from for the unworthy motive of fear of punishment (Green and Kant); those which cannot be punished without worse things following (Augustine and Aquinas thought that by forbidding prostitution worse things would result); those which affect only the individual or individuals concerned (Bentham, Mill); and so on. There are, however, objections to all these, and Sir Patrick has dealt with some of them. As I have not space here, I will not attempt to point out the shortcomings of these criteria, but will endeavour to suggest another one.

In answer to Sir Patrick's first question, "Has society the right to pass judgement at all on matters of morals?" the answer would be that the state cannot avoid holding some sort of moral doctrine; it cannot be non-committal.

> "Real neutrality is possible," wrote Sir J. F. Stephen, "only with regard to forms of religion which are not professed at all by the subjects of legislation . . . English legislation in England is neutral as to Mahommedanism and Brahminism. English legislation in India proceeds on the assumption that both are false. If it did not, it would have to be founded on the Koran or the Institutes of Menu."[13]

The English system works on the assumption that the Christian view of man is a true one—and what may conveniently be called the Christian moral law is correct. The state must concern itself with character, for it is the duty of the state to encourage in its citizens the best character possible; yet, believing that man is a

[13] *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* (1873) 2nd ed. pp. 63—4.

free responsible being, the best way for a man's character to develop is, in general, by leaving him as free as possible to make choices for himself. He may make wrong choices; he may decide to do the wrong thing on occasions, but this theory would claim that it is better, in general that a man should freely choose the wrong thing, than that he should be forced to do the right; it is better for his character.

Now there are exceptions to this, and the most notable is the case of a man choosing to do something which will disturb the peace or interfere with others; then the state must intervene to preserve the peace and separate the combatants, having regard for the character of the persons concerned. The second exception is the case of those citizens who are generally recognised to be incapable of making rational decisions, notably children and lunatics. In this case it is the duty of the state to train their faculties of free choice and responsibility, while protecting them from things which are immoral. Merely because the state decides that it should not punish certain actions, this does not mean that it approves of them; and as Sir Patrick Devlin states, there is a category of acts which the law condemns as immoral, while refraining from punishing.

The basis of state action, then, in this matter, should be as follows: The state should have (a) a moral purpose in general—the improvement of character and the cultivation of the maximum scope for individual choice to this end, and (b) a particular moral code—believing, on the basis of the Christian religion, that certain things are wrong, and that minors and other irresponsible persons should be protected against them.

How would this criterion apply to homosexuality and prostitution? The liberal would probably hold that, as such things as homosexuality, incest and fornication are not likely to overthrow the peace of society, it is better that people should be free in these matters to choose the wrong than that they should be forced to be moral; but that minors should be protected. This is roughly the conclusion of the Wolfenden Report. There can be no doubt from the tone of the report that the committee regards homosexuality and prostitution as immoral and wrong. Discussing the effect of homosexuality on family life it states, "We *deplore* this *damage* to what we regard as the basic unit of society;" and it refers to prostitution as "an *evil* of which any society which claims to be civilised should seek to rid itself".[14] Why should these things not be forbidden by law, then?

> "There remains one additional counter-argument which we believe to be decisive, namely, the importance which society and the law ought to give to individual freedom of choice and action in matters of private morality."[15]

[14] *Op. cit.* paragraphs 55 and 226 (my italics).
[15] *Ibid.* paragraph 61.

of the people is the only moral guide to the legislator, and an appeal to eternal values is excluded. I would not wish to suggest that lawmakers should ignore the moral opinions of the people, nor that there are not times when desirable legislation must be held up owing to the fact that it would result in rebellion; but there are many occasions when an enlightened lawmaker can lead public opinion.

Sir Patrick Devlin comes forward in the rôle of a defender of morality against the tendencies of the Wolfenden Report, while he is in fact a wolf in sheep's clothing. His doctrine is very much more dangerous to morality than anything which the Wolfenden Report puts forward.

If we reject Sir Patrick's theory, what do we put in its place? What should be the relation between crime and sin? We shall first take sin to mean an offence against the law of God. Few people would wish to suggest that crime and sin should be equated—not even Sir Patrick, on his own definition of sin—and various criteria have been suggested for marking off those sins which should not be punished by the state. Those which involve only thoughts, because the state cannot deal with these (Marsilius, Warburton, Blackstone, Paley and others); those which are better committed than refrained from for the unworthy motive of fear of punishment (Green and Kant); those which cannot be punished without worse things following (Augustine and Aquinas thought that by forbidding prostitution worse things would result); those which affect only the individual or individuals concerned (Bentham, Mill); and so on. There are, however, objections to all these, and Sir Patrick has dealt with some of them. As I have not space here, I will not attempt to point out the shortcomings of these criteria, but will endeavour to suggest another one.

In answer to Sir Patrick's first question, "Has society the right to pass judgement at all on matters of morals?" the answer would be that the state cannot avoid holding some sort of moral doctrine; it cannot be non-committal.

> "Real neutrality is possible," wrote Sir J. F. Stephen, "only with regard to forms of religion which are not professed at all by the subjects of legislation . . . English legislation in England is neutral as to Mahommedanism and Brahminism. English legislation in India proceeds on the assumption that both are false. If it did not, it would have to be founded on the Koran or the Institutes of Menu."[13]

The English system works on the assumption that the Christian view of man is a true one—and what may conveniently be called the Christian moral law is correct. The state must concern itself with character, for it is the duty of the state to encourage in its citizens the best character possible; yet, believing that man is a

[13] *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* (1873) 2nd ed. pp. 63—4.

free responsible being, the best way for a man's character to develop is, in general, by leaving him as free as possible to make choices for himself. He may make wrong choices; he may decide to do the wrong thing on occasions, but this theory would claim that it is better, in general that a man should freely choose the wrong thing, than that he should be forced to do the right; it is better for his character.

Now there are exceptions to this, and the most notable is the case of a man choosing to do something which will disturb the peace or interfere with others; then the state must intervene to preserve the peace and separate the combatants, having regard for the character of the persons concerned. The second exception is the case of those citizens who are generally recognised to be incapable of making rational decisions, notably children and lunatics. In this case it is the duty of the state to train their faculties of free choice and responsibility, while protecting them from things which are immoral. Merely because the state decides that it should not punish certain actions, this does not mean that it approves of them; and as Sir Patrick Devlin states, there is a category of acts which the law condemns as immoral, while refraining from punishing.

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[15] *Ibid.* paragraph 61.

days at school when he first began to interest himself in politics ecclesiastical and civil."

The review of the same book by Alasdair MacIntyre in the *New Statesman* ended:

"We live in a society and under a ruling class whose values are simply incompatible with Christianity. . . . . But the Christian Church has tied itself inextricably to the present form of society and to its ruling values. So that we have a Church with a vocabulary which has lost its Christian substance and is used instead to clothe the *status quo*. The substance has gone elsewhere. And with its departure Christianity in the traditional sense no longer exists. Canon Smyth's life of Archbishop Garbett is a monumental reminder of this non-existence."

* * * *

There is something more peculiar about the Archbishop of Canterbury's remark that adultery might well be made a crime than its doubtful morals or impracticality. This is, that the Archbishop cannot have realised quite how impractical it is.

The remark seems to suggest that it might be feasible to bring criminal proceedings against not only such a large proportion of the population that the country would resemble Siberia, but also a majority, surely, of the legislators and administrators initiating the proceedings. Churchmen are apt to talk with a similar innocence about homosexuals—as if they were a sinister group with whom no decent man ever came in contact. It becomes difficult to make any comment about this: one can only state an opinion. This is, that if laws against adultery and homosexuality were enforced, there would disappear from the scene so many politicians, dons, diplomats, financiers, etc., that the running of the country by "establishment" would immediately become impossible. This indeed might be excellent: but it can scarcely be what the Archbishop intended. This brings us back to our first point—that the oddity is less in the morality than the ignorance.

* * * *

One reason for this ignorance is perhaps the infrequency with which moderate C. of E. clergy hear confessions. A lot is said about the benefits of confession incurred by penitants, but few people point out the benefits accruing to confessors. Clergymen fortunately do not hear much of the gossip of the "who-is-living-with-whom" variety which is passed from ear to ear (though other forms of church cattiness seem common enough): but the result is that many probably just do not know what goes on upon this level, either among their flock or amongst pillars of the secular community. The only way they could learn would be if their flock confessed to them; and by a span of imagination they extended the knowledge gained to a larger realisation about society. Perhaps a lot of the

confusion about the role of the Church in Society might be cleared by a closer knowledge of what Society is really like.

Also, there might be more clarity about which sins were more dangerous than others. Most spiritual writers and confessors seem to agree that adultery is not half so destructive a sin as, say, cruelty, snobbishness, indifference or covetousness. They say this in private; why cannot it be said publicly? If we are going to suggest that any more sins should be made crimes, why not for instance the colour bar? The only ostensible reason would seem to be that this might be enforceable.

* * * *

"These people have no respect for the goodness or the integrity of the Commonwealth. 'What concerns us,' they say, 'is that it should be rich and victorious, and—best of all—that it should enjoy security and peace.

" 'What matters to us is that everyone might have the means to increase his wealth, to pay for his extravagant pleasures, and that the weaker might be kept in subjection by the greater. Let the poor serve the rich in order to eat and to live in idleness under their protection, and let the rich abuse the poor as dependents whose purpose is to ensure and enhance their high standard of living. Let the people praise those who bestow pleasures upon them and not those who offer them good advice. Let nothing that is difficult be required of them and nothing that is impure be forbidden. Let not protectorate states serve their rulers as reformers of their manners, but as masters of their estates and providers of what is thought good for them: not in sincere honour but in servile fear. Let the laws protect the rights of property and leave men's morals alone. Let nothing be accounted evil except what affects other men's possessions or persons. Let there be plenty of licensed prostitutes for those who cannot afford to keep mistresses of their own. Let there be stately buildings and sumptuous banquets, where anyone can eat and drink and be merry by day and by night as he may please. Let there be dancing everywhere, and let the theatres be under no control and full of luxurious and lewd shows. Let the man who opposes these pleasures be considered an enemy of the public good, and if he should try to interfere, let him be hounded out of society. But as for the rulers who devote themselves to giving the people a good time, let them be honoured as gods and enjoy whatever glory and worship and adulation they can exact from their supporters. Only let them take good care that neither war nor plague nor any other inconvenience disturb this reign of prosperity.' "

This is not an insight by *Prism* into the present state of Society. It is an extract from St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, condensed from Book II, Chapter XX.

Who's All Right?

By Our North Kensington Correspondent

It is certainly true that many people in North Kensington have never had it so good. The days when the Church gave thousands of meals a year to children who would otherwise have gone hungry are happily no more, and if there are still families in need of assistance, the State is now aware of its responsibility. It is safe to say that no child today need be ill-clothed and half-starved, and those who complain of the effects of the Welfare State might well ponder the alternatives.

Some of the very worst property has been cleared and the inhabitants rehoused in modern flats, which thanks to high wages and subsidised rents they are able to keep clean and well-furnished. Indeed the good taste in interior decorations and general house-pride which is shown gives lie to the critics of slum-clearance who say that the people would not know how to care for good housing and would turn even Mayfair into a slum. Surely there is no Christian who would dare to cry for the "good old days", about which a priest wrote in 1913:

> "The Mission Church is used largely by the very poorest: here they have at all events one bright haven where they can be at rest, away for a few moments from the sordid surroundings in which they live. Here their bodies are warmed, their souls relieved, their spirits uplifted, and so the whole nature is bettered.
>
> "Here also is the Coffee Palace and the Soup Kitchen where quite 3000 starving children are fed with excellent soup and pudding each week in the winter . . . . Children are hungry on Sundays and other than school-days, and grown-ups are hungry too, and we give many dinners instead of money to the sick and destitute."

Yet there is another side to the picture. Undoubtedly the great problem is housing, and there is considerable exploitation, aggravated certainly by the Rent Act. One block of old, privately-owned tenements is divided into flats of three rooms, each 12 feet by 6 feet. They open on to a stone landing where there is a lavatory and stone sink to be shared between two families. When a flat is vacated, the rent becomes decontrolled, and may rise from 35/- to £3 10s.

There the tenants have some privacy, whereas most of the rented accommodation consists of no more than one or two rooms in a large house, usually furnished but with no bathroom, and in one such house seventeen people share a single lavatory. A young professional man tried recently to find a furnished room where

he could live and look after himself. The average rent asked was £4 a week for conditions he was not prepared to tolerate. One large house was offered for letting at £20 a week, which meant in fact £2 10s. for each room unfurnished. A speculator who was prepared to put an old chair, table and bed in each could ask a rent of perhaps £5 a week, and be assured of 100% profit with no overheads (since he would do no repairs).

Look at Mrs. X whose husband has disappeared leaving her to bring up two children. When she has paid her rent she has 30/– left out of her National Assistance. If she goes out to work, who will care for her children? Will they not at once be on the way to the Juvenile Court?

Or Mrs. Y, a widow, who has an apparently adequate wage coming in each week, but who does less with £5 than another would do with £1. Mr. Z is too sick to keep any permanent job, and his wife is fully occupied looking after their five children. Even National Assistance and family allowances do not go far in such a home.

What remedies are there? In view of the fine pre-war social record of the Church, it might be expected that help would be forthcoming from that direction. Sad to say, in the part of North Kensington where the position is most acute, the clergy seem happy to hibernate in a cocoon of the worst kind of eclectic, unevangelical Anglo-Catholocism. It is said that in one well-known Catholic stronghold, the vicar and curate were absent from a patronal festival because the vicar was at the theatre and the assistant's dog was expecting puppies!

There is of course the Law. Here again, it is all very well for there to be the father-figure of SuperMac as the distant deity of Downing Street presiding over the all-embracing machinery of the Welfare State (which as we all now know was the child of the Conservative Party, along with the National Health Service and the more profitable of the nationalised industries), but this is not sufficient. As one social worker has pointed out, "Most tenants with genuine difficulties require much more than advice. At present, there is no existing organisation which is prepared to complete a Rent Tribunal application, visit the accommodation to get the facts right, arrange legal representation, and arrange protection, both legal and moral, against a threatening landlord. In this area such machinery is quite essential, and it is not adequate merely to give a tenant the name and address of the Tribunal".

The Rent Tribunal will act, but the extent to which some landlords are prepared to intimidate their tenants makes direct application for reduction almost impossible in many cases. However, the Council has the power to bring cases of excessive rents before the Tribunal without reference to the tenant or the landlord, but the Tory-controlled Kensington Borough Council persistently refuses to do so. It is true that the Public Health Officers who could

and should refer such cases to the Council have at the time of writing failed to bring forward a single case, but even so it would seem that the elected representatives prefer to hide behind the myth that "Life's better under the Conservatives".

There are landlords who unlawfully and illegally evict tenants, and in many cases the County Court had granted injunctions and damages, but there is the difficulty that even where there has been illegal eviction aggravated by assault the Legal Aid Committee seems unwilling to grant emergency legal aid certificates. Moreover, because of the shortage of Public Health Inspectors, the Public Health Acts are only partially enforced. Rent Books are often not issued, contrary to the statutory requirement, and considerable pressure has usually to be brought to bear by private individuals before any action is taken.

At the recent opening of a local school, a lady of title told her audience, with incredible naivity, that they had all known the joy of having their own home : some of her hearers had not even the joy of possessing their own lavatory or dustbin!

An election has just been fought on the materialism of growing personal prosperity. Months of advertising, overt and subliminal, convinced a sufficient minority of the electorate that they had never had it so good. Issues like Suez, Nyasaland and Hola, vital as they are to the moral prosperity of the nation, were ignored as if they had never been, and the little local difficulties of those who live in condemned houses where the walls drip with moisture treated as if they could not possibly exist in a Tory paradise.

Poverty and prosperity are relative, personal things, which can be judged ultimately only from a subjective point of view. It will, for instance, be excellent if accidents on the new motorway are reduced to 10% except for the relations of the 10% ; you may rejoice that there are only 200,000 unemployed if you are not one of the 200,000 ; and you can be content in the assurance that you have never had it so good when you are not one of the unfortunates who could not have it much worse.

Plays in Church

Gerard Irvine

Somewhere in my schooldays I picked up two determinative notions about drama. The first was the discovery that the majestic drama with which I was then perforce mainly concerned, Greek tragedy, was liturgical; more like High Mass than Hamlet. The second was that the seed of all European drama is Hymn 130 in the English Hymnal, the Easter Sequence. That it was a far cry from *Victimae Paschali* to Shaw, Coward or Rattigan—or even Sartre and Brecht—did not deter. A seed does not resemble in any way the tree it afterwards becomes, and the very disproportion between Wipo's unassuming dialogue recitatif and modern theatre was part of the charm to the schoolboy mind; when you wanted to show off it was effective (as certainly affected) to drop the airy paradox as an established fact. Anyway, established or not, I certainly took it for fact; and it disposed me to the idea that *inside Church* was the true home for plays, and the proclamation of religious truth the only proper subject for drama. (To this latter view I still to some extent subscribe.)

Later of course I realised the Mother Church did not share the facile assumptions of the schoolboy. Catholic and Protestant officialdom alike have reprobated play-acting as bad for morals. Priests of the Roman obedience are as much forbidden to attend a theatre as a Plymouth Brother elder. In a recent production of *Iolanthe* in a north-country seminary the Fairies were changed to pixies, as being less suggestive. Even in the Middle Ages when every church was a dual-purpose building and all activities of the modern church hall (including dances and bazaars) were held in the nave, or at least the churchyard, plays were an exception. Only the simplest of Mysteries were allowed in the Church; the more sensational Miracles and Moralities were relegated to the waggon in the market square. Even by the unexacting mediaeval standards the Mysteries were pretty unexciting. The principle was established, which still holds sway, that only when a play was dull enough could it legitimately take place in church. Anything which has enough vitality to strike home is liable to be accused of irreverence.

Nevertheless in the last twenty years there has been a revival of religious drama in England, some of which is suited for Church. In considering this we may find the mediaeval distinction of Mystery, Miracle and Morality still valid. Mysteries are, I take it, plays which depict scenes and personages from the Gospel and other parts of the Scripture, not merely in order to tell an interesting psycholo-

gical story (as Barry's *King David*, if that *is* interesting) but to show forth the divine acts of creation and redemption. Mystery is in fact a dogmatic sermon, not in stones but on stage. It is also an act of worship. Modern Mysteries that come to mind are e.g. Dorothy Sayers *The Devil to pay* and her broadcast serial *The Man born to be King*, Ghéon's *Way of the Cross*, R. H. Ward's *Holy Family*, Stuart Jackman's *The Prototype*, Fr. Hugh Bishop's televised Passion in modern dress, Oberammegau, and the Sunday School Nativity tableaux run up by your Vicar's wife.

Miracles depict the action of God in the life of grace, notably in the lives and martyrdoms of the saints, but also by extension of any who live under the dispensation of Grace. They are ascetic sermons in action. *Murder in the Cathedral* is the obvious example of a modern Miracle; so is Fry's *Thor with Angels*, Anne Ridler's *Cranmer* and almost anything by Graham Greene. Moralities do not represent any particular human event or specific human life as such, but merely as embodying and exemplifying universal human experiences like sin, death and judgement. They are, if you like, homiletic sermons, and not in themselves acts of worship. In practice of course it is not always easy to distinguish a Miracle from a Morality. Both are concerned with human action set against the eternal perspective, and attempt to show the workings of spiritual laws in human affairs. Miracles are more concerned with the particular situation, Moralities with the particular only as exemplifying general laws. Thus the *Family Reunion* is a Morality; so are Bridie's plays; so is Charles Williams' *House of the Octopus*.

If these plays are different kinds of sermons, there can be nothing inappropriate in principle in producing them in a Church where sermons are normally preached, and the supreme (real and not mimetic) Drama of the Liturgy enacted. Roman Catholics indeed have laboured with success to take the Church into the theatre.[1] It has remained for Anglicans to do the opposite, and take the theatre into the Church. Unfortunately they have often taken the worst theatre into the Church. They have been aided in this venture by the Lord Chamberlain's ban on the presentation in the commercial theatre of a divine Person; and also by the comparative poverty of most Anglican congregations—and churches do not charge rent. The question remains whether this venture, excellent as it may be in principle, is justified in practice.

In some cases it is clearly not. Nearly all Moralities are unsuited to a church as their very nature demands realistic presentation. The stage can be made to look like a drawing-room; a church cannot. Perhaps the only Moralities which *can* with advantage be produced in a church are mediaeval ones, like *Everyman* or the *World and the Child*—not because being old they are less offensive to pious ears,

[1] And more notably to take the Church into Hollywood. It could be hard to count the number of films since the war connected with such "religious" themes as the lives of priests and of nuns.

but because they are directly concerned with actions that happen in church : the reception of the sacraments.

There is always the danger of a mediaeval play being merely picturesque, and so losing the universal application which is the point of a Morality. There is much to be said for following the example of one church which put on *Everyman* in modern dress. The Fellowship scene, done against a coffee bar background of rock 'n rolling teenagers was sufficiently surprising to the conventional-minded. But it got home that the play was to do with their environment. The sacramental scenes of course took place in the appropriate parts of church : Penance occupied the Confessional in cotta, stole and biretta ; Knowledge in an M.A. hood prosed away in the pulpit ; and Everyman received his viaticum at the altar rails. The point was brought home, at least to the communicants, that Everyman was each and every man of them.

The same considerations go for Miracles. *Murder in the Cathedral* can obviously be performed in a Church. Rather less obviously Fry's *Thor with Angels*. This was put on, as the first venture into serious drama, one Lent by a suburban Youth Club that had hitherto been content with pretty amateurish Passion plays. It is not certain whether the actors were themselves much moved religiously by the production—though they certainly realised a new dimension of living that had not found in the plays they had done in the past—but it is certain that the audience were. Many of these did not normally come to church. But even if they had, what sermon that the Vicar could have preached could have made as forcible an impression on their imaginations as the superb climax of that play ?

The plays which are most obviously suited for presentation in Church are the Mysteries. And here lies their danger. In a way they are too suited. The devout cannot hear the old old story often enough. Nor unfortunately can the sentimentalists. The impact of the Gospel is lost not by familiarity but by flatness. And can one deny that very much of the drama presented in Church is unendurably second-rate. We are all too familiar with ladies in counterpanes talking olde Englishe by a well. The first essential of a play done in Church is that it should be a good play written by a playwright who technically knows his job. The Catholic doctrine of Creation demands that God is not glorified in drama by the piety of those who participate, but by the quality of the work as work, that is as a medium of communication, not of edifying the caste.

Those Mysteries which are a straight presentation of the Gospel narrative, rather than an exposition of it, are only a step away from the liturgical chanting of the Gospel or the chapel choir's rendering of *Olivet to Calvary*. Here the libretto is provided without royalties by the Sacred Text ; and when presented by naturals—children or very simple folk—can be most moving. Filson Young's Nativity from St. Hilary in the early thirties for instance had an impact the more

direct for its very lack of sophistication. But when this is self conscious it can be unbearably arch.

And of course even with children it must be competently produced. A Mystery is a sermon, and no amount of good intention can make a good sermon from bad production. It is no justification of a third-rate amateurish play sloppily produced to say that it is "nice for the children to do it", or even that it brings their parents to Church. God is not glorified, though the mothers may be gratified, because the toddlers look so sweet in their gold halos, clutching their paper Christmas trees, as they sing "Away in a Manger". Perhaps if it is just children, no particular harm is done, for out of their mouths the Most High perfects praise. But when this kind of thing is produced by adults, to be performed before an audience whose familiarity with television has given a certain sophistication of critical standard, it is frankly deleterious. You cannot always guarantee good acting, or find a polished producer. But you can always choose a good play, which is competent to get its point across.

And since drama is a method of communication, it is this which is really important. Might it not then be better to cut your losses and give up trying to produce plays in Church with merely parochial resources, but instead just ask down one of the professional companies which specialise in this kind of drama? So far as getting the message across, yes. But drama in church, although primarily for the glory of God and the benefit of the audience, has also an effect on the actors who are part of the parochial concern of the priest. A testimonial of this is given by a member of a Youth Club which recently presented Stuart Jackman's strange but moving play on the raising of Lazarus, *The Prototype*. Mr. Brian Cummings writes:

> "At first *The Prototype* was simply another play. I don't think that the participants appreciated any special significance either in the subject matter or in reading the script. Learning lines was the same arduous but necessary task that it is for any play. Even during rehearsals, there was little to mark a difference between *The Prototype* and a stage play. Actors were concerned with their own rôles and, to a certain degree, with those of the others who appeared in the same scenes.
>
> "Only the fact that rehearsals took place in church gave some indication that this wasn't 'just another play' after all. The awareness of the purpose—and this, from an actor's viewpoint, was I think an act of witness—came only gradually. It came as the play itself stopped being a series of apparently unrelated sequences, and was gradually transformed into a whole and live production. With this growth came the realisation that here was something to be learnt (apart from lines) and understood. It took so long to arrive at that restricted conclusion that it wasn't unnatural to despair on the audience's

behalf that they had such a limited time in which to form conclusions . . . One lady in the audience objected to the manner in which the play opened (with what was ostensibly a sermon at the end of Evensong). 'I came along here to see a play—not to pray' she commented to her neighbour. In a sense I think she did both at the same time without realizing it".

If she did, then this play at any rate was both a sermon and an act of worship. And you can't really ask for more than that.

Correspondence

PRISM'S PRAYER PREJUDICES

Dear Prism,

I have been following with interest the articles and correspondence in *Prism* about prayer. The articles in the November issue by William Bush and Valerie Pitt are full of usefulness and good material. It is an excellent thing to have such discussions in the open when misunderstandings can be exposed and positive suggestions made.

But where have they been living all these years, if they imagine that the people they criticize represent either Western or Anglican devotion and teaching? Or perhaps the question should be—what have they been reading? There is no Christian who will not rejoice that the *Philokalia* has helped somebody to find the best way of prayer for himself, but this does not mean that everyone else is going to find it equally helpful. One difficulty about the Jesus prayer is that it sends some people to sleep, and it is difficult to convince oneself that this is a fine state of prayer. And Valerie Pitt is quite wrong in supposing that simply holding on to God is called "advanced prayer": it may be and often is an elementary stage though it may also be the practice of those experienced in prayer. Of course it can be practised, as she suggests, by the simple as well as the sophisticated: Brother Lawrence provides ample evidence of this in *The Practice of the Presence of God.*

Amongst your correspondents there seems to be a common idea that the Anglican teaching tells everyone to follow the same kind of meditative exercise as the *sine qua non* of prayer. Perhaps there has been too much emphasis in some quarters on the Ignatian or similar methods in prayer. But the best writers are careful to avoid it. Evelyn Underhill has come in for a good deal of uninformed criticism, so there will be no harm in taking a quotation from her:

"Once more, everyone is not nourished by the same sort of

food, or invited by God to the same kind of spiritual activity: the rightful variety of Nature is paralleled in the supernatural life. The important thing is to discover what nourishes *you*, best expands and harmonizes *your* spirit, now, at the present stage of your growth." (*Concerning the Inner Life*, p. 58).

I wonder, too, whether your contributors have read Dom Augustine Morris's *Straight Course to God*. Speaking of the techniques of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries he writes:

> "There are still many who can use them with profit, and who should continue to do so. But there are many others who will be helped by a different approach, and who will find far more congenial a scheme of the spiritual life which is based primarily upon its Godward rather than its manward aspects." (p. 49 and rest of chaper).

There are dozens of passages from writers of the spiritual life of all ages making the point that each soul must be responsive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who alone can rightly lead the soul to the place where God would have it be. They may perhaps be summed up from two more writers: St. Jeanne de Chantal—"The great method of prayer is to have none": and Dom John Chapman—"Pray as you can and don't try to pray as you can't", and "The less you pray, the worse it goes".

Yours etc.,

MANOTICK, CANADA. HERBERT WADDAMS.

Dear Sir,

Your contributors to the discussion of prayer problems make one very remarkable omission.

Two of your contributors praise the use of the "Jesus Prayer" and another recommends the use of ejaculatory prayer during work. This is good as far as it goes, but even this is quite likely to separate life from prayer: ejaculatory prayer during work could well become a religious practice used while working instead of making the work itself a religious act. We all know the type of person who complains that work is so disturbing to his (or her) spiritual life. It may well be, but the "spiritual life" may well need to be disturbed in order that *life* may become religious. Many clergymen and the non-praying Churchgoers whom they teach make this mistake. If the spiritual life is regarded as something other than just "life", then as Miss Pitt says "daily life wins". And so it should, for daily life is God given and so may be termed "religious".

What surprises me is that none of your contributors make mention of de Caussade's book *Self Abandonment to Divine Providence*. I hope this is not because they haven't read it. His teaching on "the

sacrament of the present moment" gives real point to the relation between life and prayer. It is daily life itself which is God given; the present moment is all that matters. We might well give more people the impetus to pray if, instead of talking first about discipline and habits of prayer, we pointed out that this is God's world, that all belongs to God and that life itself in every way is religious. This might lead men to want to pray and desire will do far more than discipline. It also sounds more attractive! Let the discipline come later.

Yours sincerely,

SUNDERLAND. ROBERT JEFFERY.

Dear Sirs,

May I offer the following contribution to the discussion on the subject of Prayer? It is an extract from the chapter on "The Church: God's World-Redeeming Body" in my book *Catholicism: Humanist and Democratic.*

Having said that "the Catholic Church, which arose out of the Incarnation, is meant to be the 'spearhead' of the universal redemptive activity of the Holy Spirit in men", and having talked about the sacraments of the Church as being "intensifications" of this "universal divine activity", I go on to say:

> "I am not attempting to deal with the whole subject of Prayer, although it is, of course, the very essence of life in the Church, and, in particular, of its sacramental life. I will only suggest what seems to me to be its basis.
>
> "In the widest and most essential sense, prayer is man's co-operation, in his whole life, with the God who is ever working in and through all human life for the fulfilling of his purpose. In so far as men work for what is in fact God's purpose (whether they recognise it as such or not), to that extent they can be said to 'pray'. And in the special sense in which the word is used in the life of the Church, prayer is a particular way of co-operating with God, and is, or should be, the basis of all other ways in which people in the Church co-operate with him. In this sense, prayer is the conscious uniting of our desire that God's will shall be done, generally and in this and that particular matter, with God's desire: it is the uniting of our wills, with these matters in mind, with God's will. This act of the minds and wills of human beings, especially when it is the common act of a number of people in comradeship, is in itself a real means by which those people help God to make his will effective in the matters which they have in mind; and it also tends so to react upon them as to impel them to, as far as possible, 'do something about' those

matters in practical external action—which is itself prayer, in the wider sense of the word.

"God's all-inclusive purpose is to express himself, his 'abundant life' of Love and Justice, Truth and Beauty, in the whole life of all mankind. And prayer, for members of the Church, is their conscious co-operation, in intense and expressed desire and in external action, with God in the fulfilling of that purpose, with all that this involves with regard to all human affairs in this world."

Yours sincerely,

LONDON, N.W.3. ROBERT WOODIFIELD.

HUMBLER CREATION

Dear Sir,

I should like to take exception to the review of Miss Hansford Johnson's latest novel *The Humbler Creation* which appeared in the December *Prism*. Tastes differ, of course, but I read it with very great pleasure. It is completely contemporary in tone and presents a real problem about real people with compassion and understanding of human weaknesses.

Your reviewer's account is reasonably factual, though marred by a slightly *de haut en bas* approach, but he appears to me to fail to understand the kind of priest Maurice Fisher is and the kind of parish in which he is serving.

In the context of Central Churchmanship, it is wholly appropriate to say "You take the eight o'clock". Also, though I do not defend the flouting of Convocation, the attitude which this Vicar shows towards the re-marriage in church of "innocent" parties in divorce suits, is in line with that particular ecclesiastical affiliation, though few of its members would act on it. And it is not really accurate to say "he marries divorced people" as if it were his general policy, when there is only one instance referred to.

Again, though your reviewer did not make this point, the absence of Sacramental Confession is probably responsible for the Vicar's ineffectual approach to the problems of Peter and Lou ; the omission is not an "oddity" on the author's part, but a further example of her accuracy in describing a given Anglican context.

I would agree that Maurice Fisher has landed himself in a domestic mess through failing to heed Christ's injunctions about taking up the Cross, though who of us can afford to cast a stone ; but I feel that your reviewer has undervalued the real stability of Maurice Fisher's priestly vocation. This is the anchor which keeps him from having an affair and running off with the woman whom he has come to love.

This aspect does not appear to have come to the attention of your

reviewer, perhaps because he has not much sympathy for those English churchmen who have not inherited the mantle of the Tractarians.

Yours faithfully,

LONDON, W.11. VINCENT GIRLING, C.R.

(*Our reviewer writes*—"My main and almost total criticism of Maurice Fisher was that he did not, on his own admission, bring his faith and his prayers into his home. Surely this is neither a common nor desirable characteristic of Central Churchmanship; and to say so is not the prerogative of Tractarians.")

REPARATION

Dear Sir,

I am sure Iskra is right to criticise the Bishop of Woolwich's "obsession with the One loaf" and to draw attention to the "equally biblical concern with One Faith"; but there are some points on which he does not tell us enough:

(1) It does not seem to me satisfactory to say that the second resolution of the 1933 Convocation concerns "exceptional circumstances". And it has not been understood to concern them. Dr. Moss, replying to the former Bishop of Derby, pointed out that they were not agreed to by the Lower House and hence were not binding. A more serious issue is whether a bishop is capable of giving such a dispensation as they envisage. I am prepared to say that they are invalid and that they are wrong: but not that they mean something other than what they say.

(2) It is not only the Bishop of Woolwich and his spiritual forebear Bishop Rawlinson (*Problems of Reunion*, pp. 82—89) who are obsessed with the "One Loaf". These resolutions are not theoretical controversy-points but principles on which men act. They make a wilderness and call it peace and few voices are raised in protest. It would be helpful to know how many college chapels do in fact practise intercommunion and how many parish churches (to which the resolutions do not refer at all). It would be helpful too to know how well informed ordinary Catholic laymen are about what is happening. And then what?

(3) The question of action is a distressing one. To break the Body of Christ is a grave responsibility with terrible dimensions. But intercommunion without reunion is more than sentimentality, more even than a betrayal of the "One Faith": it is, as Fr. Hebert said, "potentially the sacrament of a new denomination" (*Intercommunion*, S.P.C.K., 1932, p. 108). Its whole outlook is individualist and post-reformation, and those who regard it as an act of disloyalty and even of sin, cannot remain silent. But they must speak with

the voice of love and penitence. I do not want to sound melodramatic but I think that the Catholic of the future must learn afresh the meaning of the Ministry of Reparation. He must learn to suffer and through the Passion to atone for his sins and the sins and misunderstandings of the Church. The awful meaning of schism must incarnate itself in his own being so that he does not merely object, though object he must, but also take to himself the consequences of the actions he condemns; and maybe, become a voluntary excommunicate for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. (Fr. Raynes suggested some years ago that there should be a regular Mass for unity in each diocese, at which the faithful abstained from Communion as an act of penitence). It is only when we have learned to suffer with our Lord the terrible consequences of schism that we shall dare to say in love and conviction of any scheme which misguidedly breaks further the unity of the visible body "Down with it, down with it, even to the ground!"

Yours sincerely,

London. Kenneth Leech.

PHILOSOPHY

Sirs,

Robin Denniston's article in your December issue is very interesting, and I am sure he is right in what he says. I think however, that certain observations should be made.

It seems to me that a sudden attack has broken out upon the British philosophy of recent years which is not altogether fair. There are people trained in earlier schools of philosophy (and a good many more not trained in philosophy at all) who are overjoyed at what they believe to be its demise. There are philosophers of the type who spend their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing. And there are younger people whose only delight is in attacking anything. At such a time, some defence ought to be made of the achievements of this school of philosophy—not indeed of any supercilious philosophers, nor of go-getting young men coming out of their schools—but of the positive philosophical achievements made.

Moral philosophy is a case in point. It is unhappily true that when the clarifications attained are accepted without a simultaneous acceptance of the Christian faith, a good deal of harm can be done. Yet the recognition that, in making moral judgements, we are referring neither to entities in a *cosmos noetos*, nor to "moral qualities", nor to "objective obligations", but to comparisons with criteria which rest ultimately on our own decisions of principle, seems to me to be in itself a positive achievement. For moral responsibility will be reinstated, not by reinstating "the Good" or

"moral Qualities" or "the categorical imperative", but by recognising the religious basis of decisions of principle. In particular, the Christian recognises that the man who fears God will want to avoid these actions which cut him off from God, and that the man who loves God will want to do those things which please God. That is, moral philosophy has here reached its limit, but, from the philosopher's point of view, the interest is diverted to the philosophy of religion.

It is significant, therefore, that there has been a great revival of interest in the philosophy of religion over the past twelve years. Perhaps this will help some people to accept, even if they do not understand, that the "concern with minutiae" has not been (or not always been) for their own sake, but as a deliberate policy for clearing up philosophical problems one at a time.

I have for some time been surprised at the complaint that philosophers are no longer trying to give guidance for life. I thought that everything needed for the guidance of life was provided by the Christian faith and the practice of the Church. If this is *our* job, it seems odd that we should criticise other people for not trying to do it; and if *we* have the goods, it seems odd that we should criticise for not pretending to deliver them.

I certainly agree with "Iskra" in the same issue when he says that he feels "that it has been a great pity that more was not made in the last thirty years of the apologetic possibilities of this tradition in philosophy". But the reason is not far to seek. Some of our theologians have been convinced that no significant philosophical discoveries have been made since 1274. Others have been soaked in nineteenth century idealism, others in the vaguer realism of the early twentieth century. And all have thought Christianity was unfavourable from their own brand of philosophy. In consequence recent British philosophy has been looked upon as slightly indecent, and not till recently have any theologians been found who are willing to look for possible help from that quarter.

Yours etc.,

DUNSTAN JONES, C.R.

Open Letter to a Vicar

My dear Vicar,

It must be six months now since you gave us that course of sermons on The Eucharist of the Parish, and I suppose it is only about thirty Sundays ago that we first had Psalms in place of hymns, and began

to have churchwardens and odd laymen reading the Epistle and also a chapter or so from the Old Testament. I have done as you asked us, and "refrained from unconsidered criticism until we have all had time to grow accustomed to the changes"; in fact, we have all been careful not to show any feelings at all, in order to spare yours. But I think you ought to know that we all like the Eucharist better as it used to be.

Please don't think that we have any kind of prejudice against laymen reading pieces out of the Bible; at least, we don't object to their being lay. But we would very much rather have the Bible read to us by people who understand it than by people who don't—none of our laymen read as well as you do, or even as well as little Father Fiddle. And you know, we really have been trying very hard indeed to work up a feeling that when Mr. Riddle or Mr. Griddle is droning away at one of your Lections, we the laity are really having "our part right in the action" so that the Eucharist is not just a priest's mystery-mass administered to us by a different order of persons set apart. But it doesn't work: we know *you* far better than we know either of them—you have been to our houses, you know our children, you have heard the confessions of some of us, and whoever may or may not have sat next to us in the pews on one Sunday or another, we have always met you every Sunday at the altar-rail. We simply don't feel that old Riddle is the Church teaching us (and as a matter of fact, none of us ever manage to get along with him half as well as we do with you); and altogether we are beginning to think that the Church knew a thing or two in the past when it was more anxious that its services should be edifying than that they should be democratic. Setting laymen to do the readings does not seem to us to be "finding today's expression for the Church's worship", but more of a distraction from worship. Most of our people are simply convinced that it reflects the terrible shortage of proper clergymen, and they hope it will only be temporary.

Nor do we feel comfortable about the psalms. I think I might repeat old Mrs. Biddle's remark to me, after that disastrous Gradual on the Sunday after Ascension—"The vicar may be right enough that the psalms was the church's first 'ymn-book, but 'e ought to be told that we've 'ad another one since then". We have, you know; and, when you come to think of it, it contains all those psalms which you keep having over and over again at the Eucharist, and it has them in versions which we can sing far more naturally, together with plenty of real Christian hymns which do not have to be interpreted typologically, or cut up to "avoid misunderstanding" or written off by the pews as just poetry or mysterious holy writ. We used to see some sort of connection, often, between the hymns that we were singing and the thing that we were doing in the Eucharist; but the psalms don't seem to fit so well. Of course, we like to roar them at Evensong, when they come in with the Old Testament

reading as a kind of memorial of the ancient times before the incarnation, before we come to the Magnificat; we don't mind a history lesson at Evensong, but can't we go back to having a Eucharist without one?

Quite frankly, we are taking the Old Testament lections as a chore to get through, to please you. After your years of teaching, we know what we have come to the Eucharist for: to make our offering through Jesus Christ, to be present at His offering, to receive communion and to be strengthened in our faith—you have made sure that we understand what was done for us in the incarnation, the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension and pentecost. Now we do see that you yourself may understand the fact of the New Testament more clearly by tracing themes back to the story of Noah, untwisting the cryptic prophecies, and mastering the history of Israel over some fifteen centuries; but remember that it took you years to learn exactly how these ancient relics of folklore and history could be fitted together into a pattern with the words and deeds of our Lord. If you can forget those years at Cuddesdon, don't you really think that to begin by explaining human sacrifices, baals, the waters of Babylon and the blood of goats is a forbiddingly academic way of preaching the startling things which happened centuries later and still happen now? Do we have to learn alchemy before we can learn chemistry? We are not yearning for degrees in the history of doctrine, only for salvation.

I wonder if you have any inkling of our shame and embarrassment when during a lection, when poor old Griddle is insisting that the Assyrians are the rod of thine anger, or Mr. Riddle is being dramatic about the ram caught in a thicket, it comes into our minds to wonder whether any complete stranger has wandered in, perhaps hoping to find out for himself what goes on in this building to bring a hundred people out of their homes on a Sunday morning . . . . we imagine him, probably one of those humanists that you are always dismissing so crisply in the pulpit: unlike us, he really listens to the words, and what does he hear? A soothsayer of the ninth century B.C. interpreting the local history of his home town; or a rabbinical midrash of the eigth century B.C. about the ending of human sacrifices. We don't mind it ourselves, because we have long ago concluded that *it's irrelevant*—but doesn't it look lunatic to a stranger? We are afraid that he, in his tactlessness will say to himself what we don't like to say even to ourselves for fear of hurting you. We come to church to witness something done and to do our part in it; before it is done, we have to listen to a snatch of an Epistle, and when it is one of the ones that we understand, we see that it has some connection with our beliefs and our lives, because it was written for people like us; and often, in the Gospel, we are suddenly hit by something that we ought to have known before. But the Old Testament—it has for us exactly the appeal of a badly-arranged museum without any labels on the exhibits.

I thought you ought to know. Of course, if you continue with the psalms and lections, we shall go on sitting through them and making holy faces; none of us will sneak off to St. Egbert's; but we shall never know our way round the museum, and even if we did, we should not want to stop and examine the exhibits while we were waiting for the *missa fidelium* and living for a short while in the realisation of the New Testament. We shan't be able to avoid the feeling that you have diluted that economical epitome of the Atonement which is the eucharist of the parish by putting into it some irrelevances; but, bless my soul, we are well used to sitting through irrelevancies in church.

Yours sincerely,

G. C. Darton.

Books

RELIGION AND THE SCIENTISTS, ed. Mervyn Stockwood. *S.C.M. Press* 5/–, 96 pp.

This book contains seven lectures given by distinguished Cambridge scientists at the University Church in 1957 at the invitation of Mervyn Stockwood. The contributors fall into three groups: first, physicists and mathematicians (Mott, Cartwright, Thompson, Hoyle), second, biologists (Young, Pantin), third, a psychologist (Thouless). Do not expect to find here a synthesis between religion and science, or even between a part of religion and a part of science, e.g. astronomy or biochemistry. All the contributors insist that they are speaking of religious matters as they appear to one layman whose profession is science. The title *Religion and the Scientists* is apt; *Religion and Science* would be a misnomer.

The physicists and mathematicians are mainly concerned with the difference between scientific and religious truth. Mott says that truth to the scientist is what can be verified by experiment, what will serve as a basis of further experiments, and what is agreed by scientists everywhere; but "religious truth is so demonstrably not of this nature". The others in this group argue, or just assume, that there are connections between scientific and religious truth. Miss Cartwright seems to treat religion as a rather muddled sort of science which in time may be tidied up (see p. 30 especially). Sir George Thompson, in a much more sophisticated essay than Miss Cartwright's, says that the true theory, in science or religion, is the one that can be used to produce an efficient aeroplane or a noble character as the case may be. Hoyle says that "to a scientist, a failure to understand the religious problem seems natural enough; . . . . he knows that what appears as an impregnable

mystery to one decade may be readily penetrated by a later decade". All these three seem to overlook the point that scientific problems are in principle soluble, that we know what would count as a solution to them; while for religious problems, and even more for "the religious problem", we don't. "God is Love"—what would count as evidence for or against this? "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth"—we can perhaps agree on what is an example and a counter-example of the meek inheriting the earth, but the plethora of glaring counter-examples does not make Christians reject the Sermon on the Mount as untrue.

The biologists have more to say on this matter of scientific and religious truth. Pantin says, somewhat sweepingly, that he does not think that conviction of religious truth can come by reason from natural knowledge; "it is what I understand by revelation and I do not belittle it". F. G. Young (in what is to me the most compelling essay in the book) writes that religious truths, such as "God exists", are one type of the basic unverifiable assumptions which we make about the world, assumptions which must be mutually consistent, minimal in number and aesthetically satisfying. Besides the problem of truth, the biologists are also much concerned with the problem of incorporating our human qualities in our scientific picture of nature. Is there, for instance, a gradual development from inanimate to animate matter, or is there some break in the process of evolution when "life" (harder to define than one might think) begins? Are mental states all physically caused? The biologists, very noticeably, take a much wider view of the whole subject than the physicists: they trace the historical development of the debate, see natural science as able to increase not only knowledge but wisdom also, and quote from a remarkable range of poetry, criticism and philosophy.

The book ends with R. H. Thouless' lecture, devoted not to a panoptic survey but to the specific problem of bringing the Christian church up to date. He recommends that the church should emphatically reject a belief in the infallibility of the Bible; should do away with unserviceable doctrine; and should scrap archaic language, specifically by rewriting the Church of England prayer-book in the common speech of today "as it is used, for example, in the daily press". The last suggestion is the most controversial; one good reason for opposing it is that the language of the prayer-book must bear constant repetition, and, for example, "The Bible says . . . . ." will not stand hard wear as will "The Scripture moveth us in sundry places . . . . ."

But as a whole the book is uncontroversial, moderate, sensible and thoroughly empirical. It contains no furious onslaughts by wild men: no large-scale system-building. It reflects the fact that, in England at least, the debate about religion and science is in the stage of consolidation, not of pioneering. But the debate will continue. D.K.B.

HUMAN CULTURE AND THE HOLY by Jaroslav Pelikan. *S.C.M.* 15/–.

Religious small talk, harmless as it seems, is dangerous because the faith of those who indulge in it can rapidly degenerate into something cosy and second-rate, tamed and tired ; when this happens, God has been "domesticated". This is nothing new. In *Human Culture and the Holy* Dr. Jaroslav Pelikan in a study of six men shows that the Christian's awareness of God has been variously interpreted as a matter of intellectual assent, which Kierkgaard and Paul protested against ; as a matter of moral consideration, which disgusted Luther and Dostoevsky ; and as aesthetic perception, which Nietzsche found inadequate and which Bach found as possible only when based on a living understanding of Christianity.

The book is uneven in quality : the chapters on Paul and Kierkigaard are plodding and tell us nothing new. The chapter on Bach is most unfortunate : to affirm that Bach's faith is implicit in his music is surely inadequate ; even allowing the relevance and interest of such an approach, it is questionable how far anything can be "read into" music, which must by its nature be accepted on its own terms. The chapter on Luther is the best where there is a concise account of a rarely discussed topic—his ethics.

But in general the author's treatment of this potentially exciting theme is disappointing ; it is, as the title implies, clumsy and in parts vague. The True, The Good, The Beautiful and The Holy are perhaps good enough for chapter headings, but not to define them further leads to woolliness and dull reading. But there is a more radical fault ; in showing what contemporary abuse Kierkigaard or Luther (for example) reacted against, indicating at length and interestingly the exact nature of Kierkegaard's distrust of the intellect or Luther's hatred of the moralism of the contemporary Roman Church, we are given little impression of the other side of the picture. If the Church's interpretation of the Holy is wrong, what is right ? This is a question the reader can fairly ask. And the opportunities are missed : in the chapters on Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky and Nietzsche, it would have been much more appropriate to have heard what they had to say instead of generalisations which have little effect. D. St.J.R.

MISSIONS, MOSQUES AND SCROLLS

Three books came to me recently which throw a most welcome light upon the current "crisis in missions" : *The Missionary Church in East and West*, edited by Charles West and David Paton (*S.C.M.* 9/6) ; *Sandals at the Mosque*, Kenneth Cragg (*S.C.M.* 12/6) ; *The Dead Sea Community*, Kurt Schubert (*A. & C. Black*, 12/6).

The symposium on the Missionary Church is the result of a conference at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey and it represents much painful self-analysis in the quest after a new approach to "the mission of the People of God in the world". As I read Marlies Cremer's moving paper on "The Broken West" I recalled a great book of the early 'thirties—Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*—which categorically repudiated the term "Christendom", said plainly that "the whole world lieth in the evil one", and urged all Churches, younger and older alike, to slough off the relations of patronage and dependence and rise up anew with a sense of mutual responsibility within the evangelism of one Church throughout all the world. These stirring addresses underline Kraemer's plea—"The boundary runs not between "home" and "foreign", between "Christian" and "non-Christian" lands, but between Church and world, everywhere"—and proclaim the absolute necessity for rank-and-file believers everywhere, not merely Church-leaders, to re-think missions in ecumenical terms.

Everyone now knows that the "crisis in missions" is primarily due to the success of nationalism on the old mission-fields. In the trail of "political liberation" there has been an upsurge of native cultures, literatures and religions. The religions in particular have asserted themselves self-consciously against the "Faith of the foreigner"—indeed, are very busy now on a mission to save the world *from* Christianity—and are commanding a new hearing in the West as well as in the East. Christian missionaries therefore can no longer "get by" with the mere assertion of the superiority of their Faith; nor can they, in all conscience, assent to the nostrum that "all the great religions are equal". What then can they do? . . . . They can do what such pioneering spirits as Paul Devanandan, G. M. Reichelt, and Kenneth Cragg are doing already: sit down humbly with the representatives of other faiths and acknowledge that what is good in them is genuinely good in its own right through the operation of the one Spirit of God, and in the same humility offer to prove that what is unique in Christianity is there for fulfilment, not for condemnation.

Like his earlier book, *The Call of the Minaret*, Kenneth Cragg's *Sandals at the Mosque* is what he would call "an essay in inter-religion". He believes in the need and promise of "a theology which is on the frontiers of religions in their mutual existence". On the frontiers of Islam and Christianity he is a familiar and much-respected figure. God gave him what it takes to get inside the embattled soul of the Muslim; so he speaks with the authority of intimate acquaintance and deep understanding. This, therefore, is a great book—great in the skill with which the two faiths, in their essential terms, are made to confront each other; great in the clarity with which it outlines their common ground; great in the frankness and sympathy with which it sets forth their antipathies. And, although it will be regarded as a valuable aid in the comparative

study of religions, I shall prize it most as a model of the true and proper Christian approach to other religions.

At first sight one might think that Professor Schubert's book had no bearing at all on the mission theme. I read it with increasing gratitude for having been put in the way of one short volume of which I could honestly say: "Having this and Gaster's *Scriptures of the Dead Sea Sect*, I need no more on the Scrolls and the Sect that produced them". Chapter II, on "The Rise of Christianity and the Qumran Texts", will be of inestimable worth to the ordinary man who wants to know how the Scrolls affect our understanding of the New Testament. But, at a second glance, I saw the link between this book and the others . . . . The problem of inter-religion, to borrow Cragg's phrase once more, has been with the Christian Faith from the beginning. The way in which our Lord adopted, refined, transformed, and then transcended the best in Jewish religious insight and Messianic hope is the perfect comment on His own words: "I came not to destroy but to fulfil"; and that surely should be the model of our procedure under the impact of other religions. J.I.B.

THE INTELLIGENT AGNOSTIC'S INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY, by EUGENE ROLFE. *Skeffington*, 21/-.

Mr. Rolfe sets himself the task that we all find ourselves confronting: in an era when Darwin and Marx and Freud have between them undermined the intitial credibility of religious belief, can we find grounds for presenting our faith as respectable?

His answer is that we can, by disregarding claims to metaphysical truth (God, he would hold, is almighty but not omnipotent) and presenting instead a utilitarian appeal. Our endeavour must be to show how the Christian concepts, of Grace, of Love and so on, make the best sense of our assorted experiences as human beings. After all, the argument runs, Christians do not spend their time wrestling with particular propositions of the Creed. Instead they learn their meaning through living.

This is a plausible argument, attractive to us who are influenced by existentialist modes of thought; and given a contempory flavour by Mr. Rolfe with his appeals to the depth psychology: "*Gestalt* does more than Milton can . . .", and "Thank God" apparently demonstrates the validity of religious affirmations because it conjures up an image (God) which is "immutable".

Such arguments offer intriguing possibilities of development: does the persistance of popular phrases like "where the hell . . . ." and "what the devil . . . ." give similar immutable demonstrations?

Convenient though it would be to sidestep the whole onslaught of science and materialism and psychoanalysis in this way, such a

procedure can never satisfy the sceptic who regards one's Christian interpretation of experience as a matter of personal choice.

A better way, which Mr. Rolfe overlooks, is to point out that because deciding whether statements are true or false involves comparing them with something else, statements like "God is Love" are not susceptible to this kind of objective treatment, since they are much more like exclamations, "Look! God-Love!" To this the sceptic can only ask "where?", and be met with an outline which he may or may not investigate.

Not only is Mr. Rolfe's argument perilous to sustain, but his whole method is deplorable: Thomism and Marxism are brushed aside in half a page, we "dive down with a flash of humour to the immutable kernel of the matter" in a flurry of mixed metaphors. Men of straw like the Stickler and the Overrighteous Man are set up to be burnt straight down, and the reader is left irritated and unconvinced. We badly need a book to examine the arguments Mr. Rolfe would defend, and in the meantime here at least is something to excite our demand. C.M.

Bandoeng at Broadstairs

The English can be incorrigibly insular. Seeing that we live on an island it isn't surprising. But those of us who profess and call ourselves Christians ought to try to widen our outlook. One opportunity for doing this came to me at last year's Conference of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius. Many Anglicans seem to think of Russians and Greeks as some how remote and no concern of ours. What would they say when confronted with Christians from ancient churches further east, who regard the Russian and Greek Orthodox as surprisingly *Western*? What does one feel when sitting between an Armenian priest from Lebanon and an Indian deacon who has been working in Ethiopia, both very consciously members of Churches with traditions that go back to the first Christian times?

One thing that one feels is that our common assumption that Canterbury, or Geneva, or Rome is the centre of Christendom, needs to be severely scrutinised. What right have we to suppose that the English Reformation, or the Latin Middle Ages, must necessarily provide the norm and standard of Christian life and thought, when confronted by representatives of African and Asian Churches which have withstood centuries of pressure and persecution from non-Christian majorities? Why should we suppose

that the Western European section of Christian history is more than one episode in the whole unfolding development of the Catholic Church? Has Latin or English, or even Greek terminology necessarily got a sacrosanct place in Christian thinking and speaking?

Listening to a talk on the Church in Ethiopia, one was suddenly jolted with a vision of what Christendom looks like when Addis Ababa is its centre, with Syrian Christians of South India on one side, and the Coptic Christians of Egypt on the other; and those remote and distant Greeks somewhere on the northern horizon. Our speaker kept referring to "The Patriarch of Alexandria". A questioner jumped up; "Do you refer to the person who we know as the head of the Coptic Church in Cairo?" The response was immediate—"For us he is always the Patriarch of Alexandria!" We heard of the negotiations between the Ethiopic and the Coptic Churches which were recently successfully concluded in Cairo. The opening point in the agenda had been debated for fifteen days: this sounded more like the Arabian Nights than the Council of Nicaea. Again, we heard of the pastor of an Ethiopian monastery who had chased away a group of Ethiopian college students, declaring in face of their complaints, "You must be Catholics or Protestants. You are wearing trousers!"

But the point lay far deeper than the bizarre surface of anecdotes. In Asia and Africa today Christianity faces a crucial challenge *because* it is identified with the Western way of life. In Africa, Islam which appears a genuinely African religion, is everywhere gaining ground. The future of the Church in those areas must lie with the Christians of those areas: and in particular the role of the ancient indigenous Churches will be of tremendous importance. All over Africa there are sects which call themselves "Ethiopian", not because they have any contact with Ethiopia, but because they feel the attraction of that ancient African Christian kingdom. Could the Holy Spirit but breathe new life into these traditional Churches of the East, the results for the whole of Christendom could be immeasurable.

And for us surely the moral is plain. The "One World" of the Bandoeng Conference is open to us when we enter our parish church, if only we will remember that what goes on inside is part of an international conspiracy, and not only the local branch of the Establishment at prayer.

A.M.A.